

Appl. No. : 10/616,015
Filed : July 9, 2003

AMENDMENTS TO THE **CLAIMS**

Please amend the claims as follows. Additions are underlined; deletions are in ~~strikeout~~ text.

Please cancel Claims 1-19 and 31-34 without prejudice. Applicant reserves the right to pursue claims directed to the cancelled subject matter in the future.

1-19. Cancelled

20. (Currently Amended) A method of making a skate boot upper, comprising:
providing a quarter panel having a curved ankle edge forming a first curvature;
providing an ankle support panel having a curved lower edge, the ankle support panel curved lower edge forming a second curvature that is ~~different than~~ not complementary to the first curvature;

deforming at least one of the ankle edge and curved lower edge in a direction generally transverse to the edge so that the second curvature formed by the ankle support panel curved lower edge and the first curvature of the quarter panel curved ankle edge generally correspond to one another; and

joining the ankle support panel at its curved lower edge to the quarter panel along its curved ankle edge so that the joined edges are biased inwardly.

21. (Original) The method of Claim 20, wherein the quarter panel is a lateral quarter panel, and providing a medial quarter panel joined to the lateral quarter panel at a heel counter, the medial quarter panel having a curved ankle edge forming a third curvature.

22. (Original) The method of Claim 21, wherein the third curvature is different than the first curvature.

23. (Original) The method of Claim 21, wherein the third curvature is generally the same as the first curvature.

24. (Original) The method of Claim 21, wherein the lateral and medial quarter panel curved ankle edges are generally continuous.

25. (Original) The method of Claim 21, wherein the ankle support panel comprises a lateral portion and a medial portion, and comprising joining the curved lower edge of the lateral portion of the ankle support panel to the curved ankle edge of the lateral quarter panel and

joining the curved lower edge of the medial portion of the ankle support panel to the curved ankle edge of the medial quarter panel.

26. (Original) The method of Claim 20 additionally comprising providing a heel counter stiffener having an upper edge that is generally aligned with the quarter panel curved ankle edges, and providing a contour seam configured so that the upper edge is biased generally inwardly.

27. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim ~~20~~35 additionally comprising providing an ankle stiffener and securing the ankle stiffener adjacent the ankle support panel, wherein the ankle stiffener comprises an aperture generally corresponding to a malleolar portion of the ankle.

28-34. Cancelled

Please add the following new claims:

35. (New) The method of Claim 20, wherein the ankle support panel additionally comprises an upper edge and generally opposing front and back edges, a panel interior being defined between the edges, and additionally comprising forming a contour seam along one of the edges of the ankle support panel, forming a contour seam comprising:

creating a notch by removing a portion of material from the panel interior, the notch extending inwardly from the edge and having opposing notch edges; and

joining the notch edges together so that the panel interior deforms to form a bulge;

wherein the contour seam is adapted to create a generally convex bulge generally corresponding to a malleolar portion of the ankle.

36. (New) The method of Claim 27 additionally comprising providing a generally rigid ankle cap, and positioning the ankle cap on an outer side of the ankle stiffener generally aligned with the aperture.

37. (New) A method of making a skate boot, comprising:

providing a quarter panel having a curved upper edge forming a first curvature when the quarter panel is laid out generally flat;

providing an ankle cuff portion having a curved lower edge forming a second curvature when the ankle cuff portion is laid out generally flat, the second curvature being non-complementary to the first curvature;

aligning the quarter panel upper edge and the ankle cuff portion lower edge with one another so that the first and second curvatures are generally aligned with one another, wherein aligning comprises biasing a portion of at least one of the quarter panel and ankle cuff portion at or adjacent the aligned edges in a direction generally transverse to the edges; and

joining the aligned edges to one another so that the resulting composite quarter panel and ankle cuff portion is biased inwardly along at least a portion of the joined edges.

38. (New) The method of Claim 37, wherein a central portion of the first curvature curves about a first radius of curvature and a central portion of the second curvature curves about a second radius of curvature that is different than the first radius of curvature.

39. (New) The method of Claim 37, wherein the ankle cuff portion additionally comprises a curved upper edge, an interior of the ankle cuff portion being defined between the upper and lower edges, and additionally comprising forming a contour seam along one of the upper or lower edges of the ankle cuff portion, forming a contour seam comprising:

creating a notch by removing a portion of material from the interior, the notch extending inwardly from the upper or lower edge and having opposing notch edges; and

joining the notch edges together so that the interior of the ankle cuff portion deforms to form a bulge.

40. (New) The method of Claim 39, wherein the contour seam is adapted to form a convex bulge in the ankle cuff portion.

41. (New) The method of Claim 40, wherein a contour seam is formed in each of the upper and lower edges.

42. (New) The method of Claim 39, wherein the quarter panel comprises a lower edge, and additionally comprising forming a contour seam along the lower edge.

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43. (New) The method of Claim 42, wherein the quarter panel comprises a medial quarter panel, and the contour seam is adapted to create a concave depression for fitting the boot to a skater's medial longitudinal arch.

44. (New) The method of Claim 42, wherein the quarter panel comprises a lateral quarter panel, and the contour seam is adapted to create a convex bulge for fitting the boot to a skater's outstep.

45. (New) The method of Claim 42, wherein the quarter panel comprises a lacing edge forward of the upper edge, and additionally comprising forming a contour seam along the lacing edge, the contour seam being adapted to create a convex bulge.

46. (New) The method of Claim 45 additionally comprising providing an elongate force direction member having upper and lower edges and attaching the force direction member to an outer surface of the composite quarter panel and ankle cuff portion so that the upper edge of the force direction member is generally aligned with the joined edges of the quarter panel and ankle cuff portion.

47. (New) The method of Claim 46, wherein the force direction member comprises a molded plastic.

48. (New) The method of Claim 39 additionally comprising providing a stiffener having an upper edge, and arranging the stiffener on an inner wall of the quarter panel so that the stiffener upper edge is generally aligned with the joined edges.

49. (New) The method of Claim 48 additionally comprising forming a contour seam in the stiffener upper edge, the contour seam adapted so that the stiffener upper edge is biased inwardly.

50. (New) The method of Claim 49 additionally comprising providing a contoured last, and arranging the joined-together quarter panel and ankle cuff portion and the stiffener on the last, providing an adhesive, and forming the boot generally to the shape of the last.

51. (New) The method of Claim 39, wherein the joined edges substantially do not overlap one another.